

Title IX Update - September

Secretary of Education Announces Title IX Rollbacks

In a speech at George Mason University, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos [announced](#) that the Department of Education would be reviewing [Title IX](#) regulations and guidance. Later in press interviews she confirmed that the Department intended to rescind a 2011 Dear Colleague letter on Title IX and sexual violence, taking the first step toward rolling back the progress made toward preventing and ending discrimination in our schools. DeVos' speech noted many situations in which schools have failed to adhere to the law. AAUW believes the appropriate response to this assertion is to enforce Title IX, not to undermine it. We [stand with survivors](#) and remain committed to protecting and defending Title IX, and to pursuing its vigorous enforcement.

[Here's How You Can Fight Back against Title IX Rollbacks](#)

AAUW helped to deliver over 100,000 letters from advocates who urged the Department of Education to protect and preserve the Title IX guidance that keeps students safe.

[Click here to join AAUW in urging the Department of Education to protect Title IX, preserve all of its current regulations and guidance, and fully enforce the law.](#)

AAUW stands with survivors and remains committed to protecting and defending Title IX. These regulations and guidance have made real progress toward preventing and ending discrimination in our schools. With this progress under attack, now more than ever we need to make our voices heard.

Tell the Department of Education we won't move backward—sign AAUW's petition today.

Here's what else you can do to stand up to this attack on civil rights:

1. **Schedule a visit to your local school's Title IX Coordinator to address the Department of Education's announcement about the future of Title IX enforcement.** Use our [lookup tool](#) to find their contact information and [log your meeting plans here](#) so that we can send you materials.
2. **At the meeting, explain that AAUW opposes any intent to roll back this guidance.** AAUW urges schools to leave in place their current, strong policies. You can bring [AAUW's statement](#) to share.
3. **Urge your local Title IX Coordinator to speak out about the importance of upholding Title IX protections at their school.** This sample [letter to editor](#) can be customized and co-signed by meeting attendees, your branch members, other allies, and local Title IX Coordinators. [Submit](#) it to a local paper or campus publication.
4. **Ask what support your local Title IX Coordinator needs from the community.** Hundreds of AAUW members have [delivered resources](#) to Title IX Coordinators to help these individuals better understand and perform their important jobs of ensuring that learning environments are free from sex discrimination. Find out how you can continue to support these efforts through ongoing conversation, community events, and more.

As a committed AAUW activist and Title IX advocate, you've helped move the needle toward preventing and ending discrimination in our schools.

With this progress under attack, now more than ever we need to make our voices heard.

Here's a recent article on AAUW's support in this area:

Burhans V. Yale: A New Wave in Title IX Cases

The epidemic of campus sexual assault has gained national attention in recent years, and student activists have been at the forefront of the work to reform schools' complaint procedures, support survivors, and implement prevention programs. But change at an institutional level requires the commitment and courage of university administrators who are willing to address the problem and work with students to make change. Susan Landino (formerly Susan Burhans) represents those administrators. Supported by the AAUW [Legal Advocacy Fund](#), she sought justice for students and administrators facing retaliation. Her case was settled favorably in 2017.

The Story Behind the *Burhans* Case

Susan Burhans was hired by Yale University in 1999 as a communications specialist and served the university as a security education coordinator. In 2012, Burhans filed suit against Yale, alleging sex discrimination and unlawful retaliation under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and other laws. Burhans claims she was discriminated against and eventually terminated after years of attempting to help survivors of sexual assault on campus and alert Yale to potential Title IX violations.

Although campus sexual assault has always been a serious problem, the issue did not gain national attention until recently. Long before much of the country — and many campus administrators — understood the severity of the problem, Burhans recognized some of the issues on Yale's campus. She says that over the course of more than 10 years as a Yale employee she tried repeatedly to notify Yale's administration of potential Title IX violations stemming from the university's sexual assault complaint procedures and to help student survivors access justice. Burhans claims that rather than address her concerns, the administration ignored her warnings and severely retaliated against her, narrowing her authority, humiliating her, and eventually terminating her position.

The case was filed in federal court in Connecticut. AAUW's Legal Advocacy Fund began supporting the case in 2015.

Why *Burhans* Matters

In order to keep students safe and fulfill Title IX's promise of equity in education, educators and administrators must step forward. The fact that Title IX helps protect students from campus sexual assault means little if administrators face retaliation for trying to enforce that protection. Employees like Burhans who speak out must be supported and empowered to make change on their campuses.

Burhans v. Yale represents a new wave of significant Title IX cases. In recent years, many administrators and victims' advocates have faced retaliation for trying to protect their students and ensure that their schools comply with Title IX — in other words, for trying to do their jobs. Burhans' case highlights the crucial role that campus administrators play in preventing campus sexual assault and the importance of supporting administrators of conscience.

The [AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund](#) has been crucial to the success of many gender discrimination cases since 1981. The [case support program](#) provides financial and organizational backing for plaintiffs who are challenging gender discrimination in education and the workplace. The funds come directly from the generous contributions of AAUW members.